

Why a Holistic Approach to Health?

For decades we have been taught that our bodies are a sort of “bio-chemical machine” pre-programmed by our genes, (a concept known as genetic determinism), and that our quality of health is primarily controlled by genetic predisposition, thereby, creating a perception and reality that dis-empowers and pre-determines the status of our health by our ancestry or our “family history.” While this belief is still held as truth by many, it continues to be the subject of great controversy among not only scientists and health professionals, but the general public as well.

The problem with this belief is that the primary focus is based on the physical body alone. It does not take into account the mental, spiritual, emotional, social and relational aspects of the self, or the role in which they play in creating health. Nor does it consider the environment in which we live, or perhaps more importantly the perception of our environment, a process known as epigenetic control.

Research Scientists, Dr. Elmer and Alyce Green of the Menninger Foundation, Molecular Biologist, Dr. Candace Pert, Stanford Medical Professor and Cellular Biologist, Dr. Bruce Lipton and others have demonstrated many times over the significance of the body, mind, spirit, emotion connection, and how each of these components of the self affect the other. They are not separate, but rather integral parts. They have also illustrated that we do not have to passively accept our ‘genetic predispositions’ and our ‘cultural and environmental impacts and conditions.’ Transformation on many levels can be achieved through conscious choice and training of the mind. This new perspective of human biology does not view the body as just a mechanical device, but rather incorporates the role of a mind and spirit, as well as other aspects mentioned earlier.

The work of Pert and her colleagues showed that a variety of proteins known as peptides (including endorphins) were among the body's key "information substances" - and each of them could affect our mind, our emotions, our immune system, our digestion and other bodily functions simultaneously. Pert, postulates that with each thought, feeling, and emotion we introduce we create chemical changes that shape our physiology. In other words, by changing our thoughts, feelings, and emotions, we can create changes in our autonomic systems and alter our health and well-being. She believes, along with many others, that the soul, mind, and emotions, play an important role in health and concludes that, "The body is the unconscious mind!"

Through Lipton’s research of examining the processes by which cells receive information, he postulates that genes and DNA do not control our biology; that instead DNA is controlled by signals from outside the cell, including the energetic messages emanating from our positive and negative thoughts. When we change our perceptions or beliefs, we send new messages to our cells; this communication reprograms their expression and shifts our DNA. According to Lipton, this “new-biology” is fundamental in all healing and reveals why people can have spontaneous remissions from disease or recover from injuries deemed to be permanent disabilities

Through the discoveries of these scientists and others like them, there is a common denominator that we cannot ignore: they each acknowledge the power contained in the body, mind, spirit, emotion connection and a “holistic” approach to health. For healing,

harmony and balance to occur within, we must be willing to widen our perspectives to understand how the various dimensions of the self and our environment affect our total being. We cannot continue to divide into pieces that which was designed to work as a whole.

Additionally, we must take a more active role in the decisions that affect our health and well being. We can accomplish this by researching and questioning various approaches, while at the same time observing and listening to our total being, rather than arbitrarily giving way to a system that dis-empowers and denies our very role in sustaining life and health.

The more we allow ourselves to be open to contributions and possibilities that help us re-define what we thought we knew about our biology and how it works, and explore the different facets of our being that interface, the closer we will come to finding solutions to the many conditions that impair our health, vitality and longevity and appreciate the value of a holistic approach to living.

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Resources

Elmer and Alyce Green, "Biofeedback and Volition," *Subtle Energies and Energy Medicine* 10 (1999)

Candace Pert, *Molecules of Emotion*

Bruce Lipton, *Biology of Belief*